

RURAL DISTRICT OF BRIDGWATER

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

FOR THE YEAR 1946.

G.H. FRINGLE, M.R.C.S. (Eng.) L.R.C.P. (Lond.), D.P.H.

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

RURAL DISTRICT OF BRIDGWATER.

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OF HEALTH FOR 1946.

Health Department,
Town Hall,
Bridgwater.

April 1947.

To the Chairman and Members of the
Bridgwater Rural District Council.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have pleasure in presenting my Sixth Annual Report on the health of the Rural District. The report is in the same abbreviated form as its recent predecessors, and owing to the fact that figures essential for the preparation of the vital statistics are not yet to hand it was considered advisable to frame the report in such a manner that these can be added at a later date. By resorting to this expediency I am able to present this report before I leave in June.

I should like to take this opportunity of thanking the Chairman and Members of the Public Health Committee for their interest and support, Mr. Maile and his Assistants for their excellent cooperation, and the Heads of other Departments for their assistance during the six years I have spent as Medical Officer of Health of the Rural District.

I am,
Your obedient Servant,

G.H. PRINGLE.

STATISTICS FOR THE YEAR 1946.

Area (acres)	86,608
Population (Registrar General's estimate)	
No. of inhabited houses on 31st December 1946	5,528
Rateable value on 31st December 1946. £	86,633
Sum represented by 1d. rate	£ 360

Live Births

	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Total</u>
Legitimate.			
Illegitimate.	---	---	---
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Birth Rate per 1,000 of estimated resident population

Still Births	Total
Still birth rate per 1,000 total (live & still) births				

Death Rate - Total number of deaths
Rate per 1,000 of the estimated resident population.

Puerperal Deaths

<u>Deaths</u>	<u>Rate per 1,000 Births</u>
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From Puerperal Sepsis
From other Maternal Causes

Infantile Mortality (Deaths of infants under one year of age.)

Legitimate
Illegitimate

Rate of all infants per 1,000 live births
Rate for all legitimate infants per 1,000
legitimate live births
Rate for all illegitimate infants per 1,000
illegitimate live births.

Other Deaths.

Deaths from Cancer (all ages)
Deaths from Measles (all ages)
Deaths from Whooping Cough (all ages)
Deaths from Diarrhoea (under 2 years of age)

Causes of Death during 1946.

Cause of Death	M	F	Total
All causes			
1. Typhoid and para-typhoid fevers			
2. Cerebro-spinal fever			
3. Scarlet Fever			
4. Whooping Cough			
5. Diphtheria			
6. Tuberculosis of respiratory system			
7. Other forms of tuberculosis			
8. Syphilitic disease			
9. Influenza			
10. Measles			
11. Acute poliomyelitis and poliomyelitis			
12. Acute infantile encephalitis			
13. Cancer of buccal cavity and oesophagus (m) uterus (f)			
14. Cancer of stomach and duodenum			
15. Cancer of breast			
16. Cancer of all other sites			
17. Diabetes			
18. Intracranial vascular lesions			
19. Heart disease			
20. Other diseases of the circulatory system			
21. Bronchitis			
22. Pneumonia			
23. Other respiratory diseases			
24. Ulcer of stomach or duodenum			
25. Diarrhoea under 2 years			
26. Appendicitis			
27. Other Digestive diseases			
28. Nephritis			
29. Puerperal and post-abortion sepsis			
30. Other maternal causes			
31. Premature birth			
32. Congenital malformation, birth injuries infantile diseases.			
33. Suicide			
34. Road Traffic accidents			
35. Other violent causes			
36. All other causes			

PREVALENCE AND CONTROL OVER INFECTIOUS AND CONTAGIOUS DISEASES

The following table sets out the cases of notifiable diseases that occurred in the Rural District during 1946. The table is drawn up after making the necessary amendments to the original notifications owing to corrections in diagnosis by either the practitioner or the Medical Officers at the Isolation Hospitals:-

Diseases.

Acute Encephalitis Lethargica	1
Acute Poliomyelitis	-
Cerebro-spinal Meningitis	-
Diphtheria	2
Dysentery	-
Enteric Fever (including paratyphoid)	-
Erysipelas	5
Measles	2
Ophthalmia neonatorum	1
Pneumonia	3
Puerperal Pyrexia	1
Scarlet Fever	9
Small Pox	-
Whooping Cough	9
	<u>33</u>

The year was noteworthy for the almost complete absence of notifiable infectious diseases in the district.

Diphtheria Immunisation

The following table shows the number of children who completed a course of immunisation during the year:-

Age under 5 years	Age 5 - 15 years	Total
231	22	253

As in previous years each village or a special centre serving groups of villages, was visited once or twice during the year, or whenever there were sufficient children to warrant a special visit. Once again I wish to record my thanks for the valuable assistance I have received from District Nurses, School Teachers and voluntary helpers.

A regular weekly diphtheria immunisation clinic is held in Bridgewater, and parents resident in the Rural District can attend this clinic if unable to be present at their local centre.

The best method of protection is to give each child two immunising injections at one year of age, and a third reinforcing injection early in school life.

Tuberculosis.

There were 35 cases of respiratory and 3 cases of non-respiratory tuberculosis notified during the year.

Scabies.

The number of Rural District cases of scabies treated at the Old Isolation hospital was as follows:-

Male Adults	12
Female Adults	16
Children	<u>59</u>
	<u>87.</u>

No changes have been made in the treatment arrangements which continue to function satisfactorily.

The total number of cases treated is approximately one half of last year's figures.

SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA

1. Water

Full details of the various sources of supply were given in last years report.

The Water Engineer reports that 1,700 yards of 10 inch main were substituted for old 8 inch main to increase the quantity of water for distribution. No shortage was experienced during the year.

2. Sewage Disposal.

The Council's Consulting Engineers have surveyed the whole district and following the presentation of a comprehensive report the various Parishes in the Rural District have been arranged in order of urgency and the work will proceed on the lines suggested in the report.

The most urgent Parishes are Cannington, Chedzoy and Mether Stowey and it is hoped to commence these schemes this year.

3. Sanitary Inspection of the Area.

The records given in the Chief Sanitary Inspector's report show the number of insanitary conditions dealt with.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CHIEF SANITARY INSPECTOR FOR 1946.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies & Gentlemen,

I beg to submit my Annual Report for the year ending 31st December, 1946.

This Report is again very much abbreviated and should be considered only as a summary of the work carried out during the year.

Complaints and Nuisances.

The number of complaints investigated during the year was 103, an increase of 9 on the previous year. In many cases nuisances were abated as the result of informal action but it was found necessary to serve 7 Abatement Notices, an increase of 3 on 1945. On inspection, a number of complaints were found to be not justified and no action was taken in regard to them.

Of the nuisances found, 89 were abated during the year. An altogether increasing difficulty was again experienced in getting work carried out, owing to extreme shortage of labour and building materials. In many cases it was necessary to extend the time limit set out in Notices, in order to give owners of property the fullest opportunity of abating the nuisances. The number of visits made in connection with nuisances was 201.

Housing.

The number of houses inspected under the Housing Acts was 1,383. 12 houses were represented as unfit for habitation and incapable of being rendered fit at a reasonable cost and Demolition Orders were made by the Council in 7 cases. In two cases the Council accepted undertakings from the owners to carry out approved works within a stipulated time, and one undertaking not to use a house for human habitation was also accepted. Four houses, the subject of Demolition Orders, were demolished during the year.

I feel that I must repeat the statement contained in my Annual Report for 1945:-

"The general condition of house property has further deteriorated during the year and it is evident that the lack of ordinary maintenance work during the war years will result in an increased number of condemnations in the near future. This will have the effect of increasing the serious shortage of housing accommodation in the District."

This tendency has become increasingly evident in the year under review.

Considerable difficulty has again been experienced in getting housing repairs carried out and in many cases substitute materials have to be used making it inevitable to accept a lower standard than would be tolerated under normal conditions. A large number of small items of disrepair are accumulating throughout the District which will call for ultimate action under the Housing or Public Health Acts, and it is extremely likely that many of these will have become major defects by the time effective action for remedying them can be taken.

In accordance with the scheme for the Control of Civil Building under Defence Regulation 50, the Council has been forced into the position of having to refuse applications for building licences in respect of works of improvement which in normal times they would be

pressing owners to carry out. This situation is most unfortunate and will have serious repercussions when restrictions are lifted and the Council is again in a position to carry out its normal functions under the Public Health and Housing Acts.

• The housing shortage in the district is still acute and the construction of factories in the Rural District on the outskirts of the Borough of Bridgewater will of course tend to increase the demand for housing accommodation. The completion of Council houses now in course of erection or projected will alleviate the shortage to some extent, but where families living in condemned houses are transferred to new Council houses, the houses vacated are not thereby made available for the accommodation of other families and to this extent the aggregate number of houses available for occupation is not increased. This situation cannot be avoided if the Council is to carry out the statutory duty of giving preference in the selection of tenants to those families occupying insanitary or overcrowded houses.

During the year twelve certificates of essentiality were issued in respect of work on twelve houses at an estimated cost of £2,577.

The scheme for the control of civil building was continued during the year and 90 licences were issued, 83 applications for licence were refused and in 20 cases licences were issued for a lower sum than that applied for. 24 licences were granted for the erection of 30 houses and bungalows, but in June the Ministry gave instructions that no further licences were to be issued for the erection of dwellings for private occupation. The number of visits in connection with building licences was 443.

65 plans for structural alterations and additions to dwelling houses were approved during the year, and the work was inspected in progress. 32 visits were made to new work.

The Rural Housing Survey was continued and during the year 1,371 houses were inspected and classified as follows:-

Categories:-	1. Satisfactory in all respects.	1.
	2. Minor defects.	132.
	3. Repairs or structural alterations.	859.
	4. Suitable for housing (R.W.) Acts.	118.
	4a. Suitable for acquisition.	-
	5. Unfit and cannot be repaired at a reasonable expense.	379.

Houses in Category 4 are, of course, also placed in one of the other categories.

Re-inspections were made in two cases.

Overcrowding.

Fourteen new cases of overcrowding were discovered during the year, eight of which were abated by informal action.

Thirty two visits were made in connection with overcrowding.

Bakshouses.

Seven visits were made to bakshouses, and informal notices served were duly complied with. Five bakshouses changed ownership during the year, and one was removed from the register.

General Sanitation.

The following improvements were carried out, generally, as the result of informal action:-

W.C's.	50.
Baths.	24.
Sinks.	27.
Chemical closets.	5.
Drainage Systems.	29.
Lavatory basins.	18.
Connections to water main.	8.
Connections to sewer	7.
Larders	2.
New windows.	4.

A number of other minor improvements were also carried out.

Meat and Food.

Every effort was made during the year to maintain the regular inspection of meat and other food at retail shops and 101 visits were made for this purpose.

It is also the practice to inspect the meat of animals killed for home consumption under licences issued by the Food Control Committee, and in view of the percentage of animals found to be diseased, this practice has been found to be justified. 197 visits were made for this purpose.

I give below details of food condemned during the year:-

Beasts.

Carcasses and organs	2
Head and tongues	2
Set of lungs	1
Livers	3
Beef	25 lbs.

Sheep.

Carcasses and organs	4
Heads	1
Sets of lungs	1
Liver	1
Spleen	1
Mutton	22 lbs.

Pigs.

Carcasses and organs	2
Legs	2
Heads	15
Sets of lungs	7
Livers	6
Kidneys	2
Mesenteries and intestines	10
Pork	12 lbs.

Other foods.

Tins of various foods.	44
Bacon	15 lbs.
Jam	42 lbs.
Tea	2½ lbs.
Cheese	50 lbs.

Milk and Dairies.

The number of inspections carried out during the year was 410, an increase of 99 on the previous year.

The number of producers on the register at the end of 1946 was 811 including 138 producer retailers. The number of producers of T.T.milk was 31 and there were also 29 producers of accredited milk. The number of retail purveyors of milk was 17.

The sampling of designated milk was continued during the year up to 30th June; from this date delegation of these duties to the Rural District Council ceased. 117 samples of T.T. and accredited milk being taken, of which 23 were reported to be unsatisfactory. In addition 5 samples of heat-treated milk were taken, none of which were reported to be unsatisfactory.

30 samples of milk were taken for testing for the presence of Tubercle Bacilli and no sample was found to give a positive result.

40 new registrations were granted during the year, 39 for wholesale purveyors, 2 for wholesale and retail purveyors, and 5 for retail purveyors.

The effort made to get improved conditions at dairy farms during the year, produced the following results:-

New cowshed floors and improved drainage	40
New cowsheds	15
New dairies	21
Main water supply to cowsheds	4
Cowsheds rebuilt	1
Improved lighting and ventilation	3
New milking parlours	3

This is a considerable improvement on the figures submitted in my last Annual Report.

Moveable Dwellings.

27 visits were made during the year in connection with moveable dwellings.

Infectious Diseases.

35 disinfections were carried out during the year 59 visits being made in connection with infectious diseases.

Verminous Premises.

11 visits were made to verminous premises and 7 dwellings were treated for vermin; in addition 15 visits were made in connection with rodent infestation, apart from those made by the Rodent Operative.

The Rodent Operative resigned his appointment in November, and the vacancy has not yet been filled.

I am, Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,
Your obedient Servant,

F.A. MALLE.

Chief Sanitary Inspector.